

Environmental Education and Stewardship

JON HOYT / DNR

Washington has a rich legacy of lands and resources. Providing information about them and encouraging individuals and communities to get to know them is one of the services DNR provides to the public.

Students in the watershed program launched in Eastern Washington

Half the student body of Jenkins High School in Chewelah – more than 200 students – spent a day learning about ecological interactions on 40 acres of state trust land. Their experience was an extension of opportunities for Eastern Washington students to participate in DNR's successful Students in the Watershed program.

Students visited seven teaching stations where they learned about ecosystems, fish and wildlife, hydrology, forestry, geology, plant identification, and aquatic insects.

The program is modeled after the Students in the Watershed program in the Tahuya State Forest, which includes a field day when high school students teach elementary students about the ecosystem interactions.

A field day is planned for the Chewelah high school students to teach fourth graders from their school district. In another aspect of the program, the high school students will help DNR land managers by gathering scientific data. The students already have removed a quarter-mile of old, four-strand barbed wire from range land to facilitate wildlife movement and migration. They have plans to remove more.

Teacher workshops focus on natural resource curriculum

For the fourth year, DNR held "Discover Washington's Natural Resources" workshops for middle and high school teachers. These two-day workshops immerse teachers in activities, presentations, and field trips to prepare them to teach students about natural resources and resource management issues.

The workshops are organized and led by DNR staff in partnership with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each participant receives a teacher's activity and curriculum guide. Each activity is linked to the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Topics covered in the workshops include agriculture, forest ecology, wildfire, biodiversity, geology, special forest products, salmon, aquatic habitats, forest health, noxious weeds, and watersheds.



DENA SCROGGIE / DNR PHOTO

Photo top: High school students in Chewelah learn from DNR geologist Chuck Cullick as part of Students in the Watershed activities.

Photo bottom: Teachers from around the state participated in an activity called "Web of Life" at the Spokane Discover Washington's Natural Resources teacher workshop in June.

New map of major public lands produced

DNR periodically publishes updates of its maps. In 2000, the department produced a new edition of the Major Public Lands map. First published in the 1960s, the map offers a comprehensive view of state, federal, tribal, and larger municipal lands in color-coded format. The new edition includes information on the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation's public lands inventory, and DNR's Habitat Conservation Plan. It also includes updated acreage totals, new ownership boundaries, place name changes, new parks, and new wildlife refuges. The map is a useful classroom tool. To get a free copy, call (360) 902-1234; Telephone Device for the Deaf, (360) 902-1125.

Chewelah Peak learning center to benefit Eastern Washington students

For many years, the Cispus Learning Center near Randle, in Lewis County, has provided thousands of students with opportunities to learn firsthand about wildlife, watersheds, and many other features of the natural world. Beginning in 2002, students in Eastern Washington will have access to a similar camp-style facility on state-owned lands at Chewelah Peak in Stevens County. A 20-acre site on forested Common School Trust Land has been leased to be developed in cooperation with the Association of Washington School Principals and Educational Service District 101. When completed, the camp will include classrooms, dormitories, a kitchen, housing for caretakers and camp directors, a challenge rope course, and water and sewage systems. The camp will provide excellent opportunities for scientific field research work as well as other natural sciences curriculum. When not in use by students, the camp also will be available for conferences and workshops.

Trees for the 21st century program gets Arbor Month boost

Washington has lost much of its original forests. For example, the Puget Sound area has lost nearly 40 percent of its tree cover since 1972 as population growth and suburban development replaced forests. More trees are needed to produce oxygen, to absorb stormwater, and to provide shade, comfort, and beauty in the urban landscape.

Toward that end, DNR, along with the Washington Community Forestry Council, the Washington Arbor Day Council, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, created the Trees for the 21st Century program. This partnership provided local communities with the opportunity to plant one of several varieties of trees: western hemlock, western redcedar, paper birch, Kousa dogwood, and ginkgo. These five species were chosen for their special historical and cultural significance. More than 180 organizations responded to the offer of free trees.

DNR's Community and Urban Forestry Program also distributed federal grants totaling \$200,000 to Washington communities for projects such as arboretum development, installation of interpretive signs, street tree plantings, conducting tree inventories, and creek restoration.

Commissioner Belcher, who has chaired the Washington Arbor Day Council for the past eight years, recognized communities that have promoted the planting, care, and maintenance of community trees during Arbor Month activities across the state.



Commissioner Jennifer M. Belcher and youngsters planted several new trees during an Arbor Day ceremony at South Puget Sound Community College. The trees were provided through DNR's Trees for the 21st Century program.

SUSAN ZEMEK / DNR